REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance the case to issue without delay.

Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to further specify the presence of one or more ribs which extend in an outward taper from an exterior wall of the pour spout towards the circumscribing wall. Support is found in original claim 8. The "taper" has support in the original drawing Fig. 1, 3 and 4 as seen through element 24. New claims 14 and 15 reciting the alignment rib (72) has support at page 14 (lines 11-17).

Claim 16 reciting a laundry product and viscous gel has support at page 2 (lines 1-5 and 8-9) and page 9 (lines 11-12).

Claims 1-7 and 9-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ekkert et al. (US Patent 5,435,467). Applicants traverse this rejection.

Ekkert et al. does not disclose ribs (24) which extend in an outward taper from an exterior wall of the pour spout toward the circumscribing wall. The Examiner has recognized this deficiency by the exclusion of claim 8 from the rejection. For the aforementioned reason, the claims would not be anticipated by this reference.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ekkert et al. (US Patent 5,435,467) in view Haffner et al. (US Patent 5,462,202). Applicants traverse this rejection.

Liquid laundry products are gaining an ever greater share of the detergent market relative to powders. Convenience aided by bottles with pour spouts undoubtedly is an important reason for this market shift.

Some problems exist with present containers, especially with those having drainback fitments susceptible to double pouring. Double pouring is when two streams of product are dispensed by a single pouring fitment. One stream proceeds through the spout as intended. Another stream travels through a drainback reservoir. Often, the latter stream may not pour into the area targeted by a user. This results in the product being spilled causing an unpleasant experience. The problem is compounded with use of more viscous liquids, e.g. viscous gels.

Applicants have addressed the viscous gel pouring issue by development of a spout with an especially large opening relative to that of the bottle opening (equated with a circumscribing wall of the fitment). Double pouring can be better controlled in a geometry wherein the pour spout area to the circumscribing wall area is greater than about 0.20.

Additional to the ratio insight, applicants have found effective the placement of one or more ribs (24) which extend tapering outwardly from an exterior wall of the pour spout towards the circumscribing wall.

Ekkert et al. as confirmed by the Examiner does not teach or disclose ribs. This reference is concerned with three problems. These include the need to increase drip back of product into the container once pouring is complete, stacking capability, and improved product evacuation. See column 1 (lines 61-68) bridging to column 2 (line 15). "Double pouring" is not a problem to which this reference seeks a solution.

Haffner et al. was cited as teaching a fitment (25) having a pour spout (26), and the pour spout having one or more ribs (46) extending from an exterior wall of the pour spout outwardly towards a circumscribing wall. Column 3 (lines 8-17) were cited.

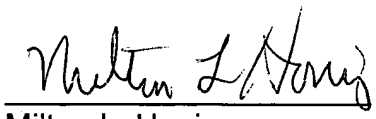
Rib (46) of the reference tapers **inward** along a vertical length from top to bottom. See Fig. 1 and 5. This configuration was engineered to prevent multiple spouts in stacks from being compressed too much. See column 3 (lines 18-20).

By contrast, the one or more ribs of the present invention taper **outward** toward the circumscribing wall. This outward taper is required as an interference with the flowable composition to block flow and thereby minimize the double pouring problem. Thus, the difference in taper orientation is a direct result of a problem faced by the respective inventors. Haffner et al. tapers inward to achieve improved stacking. The present invention tapers outward to inhibit double pouring. The problems are different and so are their solutions. Accordingly, a combination of Ekkert et al. in view of Haffner et al. would not render the instant invention obvious.

Applicants note that their new claims 14 and 15 recite alignment ribs (72) which assist in stacking; these are similar to those of Haffner et al. but quite different than the double pouring prevention ribs (24) recited by the present independent claims.

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, applicants request the Examiner to reconsider the rejection and now allow the claims.

Respectfully submitted,



Milton L. Honig
Registration No. 28,617
Attorney for Applicant(s)

MLH/sm
(201) 840-2403